

Produced for the members of the Maryland and Army National Guard

# Maryland MUSKET

Fall 2007

Volume 7.1

A RACE  
TO THE  
FINISH







*Sgt. Jessica Kucek, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter crew chief, talks on the radio during the final training exercise at Fort Carson, Colorado prior to Kristine Henry*

## Maryland Musket

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deployment to Afghanistan in August. Photo by Maj.

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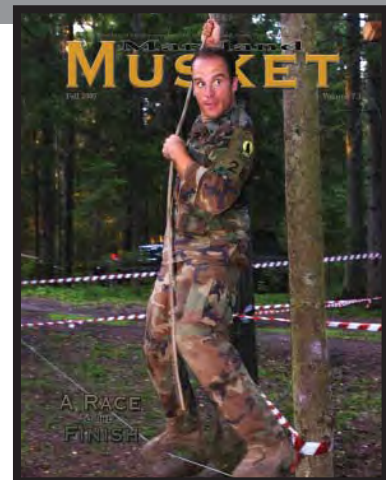
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### on the cover...

***A Special Forces Soldier navigates an obstacle during Erna Raid 2007, held in northern Estonia. The annual Erna Raid tests Soldiers' skills and endurance over six days of grueling competition. Photo by Spc. Keith Muckler***





# Technical Assistance

The sounds of cranking ratchets echo throughout the automotive bay as mechanics from the Maryland Army National Guard, G Company, 729<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion stay busily focused on the tasks at hand.

The unit's 32 Soldiers, who drill in Pikesville and at Camp Pretterd in Reisterstown, are responsible for the upkeep of vehicles used by Soldiers from 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 110<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery.

"We do maintenance on the vehicles assigned to us or to other units and make sure everything's ready to go," said Sgt. Thomas A. Martinez, a light-wheeled vehicle mechanic with G Co. "We also constantly train and get up-to-date with some of the newer equipment we receive."

Maintenance can be a challenge to complete during annual training and monthly drills, along with other mandatory duties.

Staff Sgt. Jessie D. White, a quality control inspector assigned to G Co., said he typically assigns two or three Soldiers to work together on a team. There are six teams, and each team is responsible for the maintenance of one vehicle per drill period.

Supplementing this Guard mission is the fact that some Guardsmen bring knowledge to the job as both Soldiers and fulltime civilian technicians. Six of the unit's 32 military mechanics are technicians at two of the state's eight Field Maintenance Shops, at Camp Pretterd and in Pikesville.

On a daily basis, we [technicians] maintain the equipment that will be needed throughout the week, said White. "Between annual [vehicle] services and breakdowns during drill weekends, it's virtually impossible for a unit to keep up on everything that needs to be done."

When additional services are on the schedule, technicians can help pick up the slack.

"Having technicians in the unit is a benefit," said White. "We [technicians] who do the job every day also have the experience to give additional training to the unit."

As a National Guard technician, White is an automotive repairman conducting preventive maintenance checks and services on the same Humvees and Commercial Utility Cargo Vehicles he troubleshoots as a Guardsman.

The assistance of National Guard technicians, like White, helps the mission to thrive and also benefits their military counterparts by providing them additional workspace.

"We have eight [FMS] throughout the state, and all of the major work is done at these shops," said Staff Sgt. Marion E. Aranda, senior mechanic with G Co., and a fulltime technician. "These shops actually belong to the State Maintenance Office, but when you have technicians helping out, you have the availability of these facilities."

The value of teamwork between the military and the National Guard technicians is critical to a larger combat mission.

G Co. mechanic, Spc. Eric K. Hinson, returned from an Iraq deployment last year. He saw the value of mechanics' efforts firsthand. "Without maintenance you can't conduct a mission," he said. "We all play a big part in it."



*A Soldier from the 729th Brigade Support Battalion provides technical assistance to the 110th Field Artillery and commercial utility cargo vehicles for the 2nd Battalion, 110th Field Artillery.*

## Text and



*Battalion checks and fills fuel levels during a maintenance check of the vehicle. The 729th BSB provides maintenance and service repairs to Humvees the Maryland Army National Guard.*

**d Photography by  
Spc. Jennifer Sardam**



# UNITY DAY

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
SPC. LONI KINGTON

**T**he Fifth Regiment Armory is normally a quiet, serene building, however on Unity Day 2007 this was not the case. Over 300 participants filled the room to engage in the annual celebration. Volunteers set up a cultural smorgasbord of food and entertainment for members of the Maryland Military Department to enjoy. Displays were erect to showcase the significant contributions from African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Hispanic Americans and American Indians, just to name a few.

The celebration provided a great deal of entertainment for all to see.

Belly dancers, sponsored by the Middle Eastern Americans, showed off their talent on stage and everyone was amused by the pasta-eating contest,

sponsored by the Italian Americans.

Unity Day, however, represents so much more than food and fun facts. Unity Day is essentially a special ethnic observance day designed to, “enhance cross-cultural awareness and promote harmony among all members of the Maryland Military Department.”

Initially, the Maryland Military Department had a separate celebration for each culture, said Lt. Col. Jan

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A celebration designed  
to bring employees  
together through  
cultural understanding

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*Spc. Aaron Edwards, a counter drug specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 58th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, administers a simulated alcohol test that demonstrates what it would feel like to have consumed enough alcohol to be legally intoxicated, during the Maryland Army National Guard's annual Unity Day held at the Fifth Regiment Armory.*

Burke, state equal employment manager and event coordinator for Unity Day.

The solution was to blend all the cultural observance days into one, so everyone had the chance to learn about the different cultures represented in the Maryland Military Department.

Burke borrowed this concept from her counterpart in New Jersey who had great success when implementing a joined, multicultural Unity Day.

When the New Jersey National Guard celebrated their Unity Day, Burke and her committee attended to get a few ideas.

After overcoming many obstacles the first year, the second annual Unity Day was a success.

We learned a lot the first time around, and were able to cut the planning time down to 7 months this year, said Burke. We still faced a few obstacles, but Unity Day 2007 was still very much a success.









# TRAINING UP

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The last contingent of Soldiers from the 58<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team departed Maryland earlier this year en route to Iraq. Four hundred members of the brigade's 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 158<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment departed Annapolis for Fort Dix N.J., where they will prepare for their deployment to Iraq.

The unit was the final increment in a series of mobilizations that began in April, when the IBCT's Headquarters and Headquarters Company departed the Pikesville Armory. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 175<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, augmented by maintenance personnel from the 729<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion, followed in May.

"We are deeply indebted to these Citizen-Soldiers and their families for their sacrifices in the defense of our nation and state," said Maj. Gen. Bruce F. Tuxill, the adjutant general of Maryland. "They are well-trained, well-equipped, well-led, and I have every confidence in their ability to perform their mission."

Approximately 1,300 Maryland National Guard soldiers have been mobilized and will be deployed to Iraq as a part of this call-up. In addition, troops from the New Mexico and California Army National Guards are augmenting the 58<sup>th</sup> IBCT.

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Text by Rick Roth, state PAO office  
Photography by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy



## TRAINING UP

*Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 58th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are training over obstacles during individual movement training at Fort Dix, N.J. The 58th IBCT trained at Fort Dix in preparation of deployment to Iraq. Photos by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy*





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# SPECIAL F

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY SPC. KEITH MUCKLER



*Capt. Adolphus Houck makes his way across a northern Estonia waterfall during the Erna Raid 2007 competition in northern Estonia. The competition tests Soldiers' skills and endurance over six grueling days of competition.*



# ORCES IN ESTONIA



ern Estonia. The annual Erna Raid

After six grueling days ranging over 247,000 acres in northern Estonia, the United States team finished third among international countries and 15<sup>th</sup> overall in Erna Raid 2007, matching last year's results against international entries. Erna Raid is billed as one of the world's longest and most difficult military competitions.

Although Germany and Finland's two teams were first through third respectively among non-Estonian international competitors, the United States was actually third among international countries since they entered only one team. Multiple Estonian teams competed to round out a total of 30 four-man teams from nine nations in the final standings. In addition to Finland, Germany and the United States, the other countries at this year's Erna Raid were Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Czech Republic, Portugal as well as host country Estonia; China and Romania sent official observers.

The team commander of the four-man U.S. contingent, stated that "The team did great. It was the first time the team had worked together and the first time any of the competitors had been to that competition. So they were competing against [other countries] that sent the same team every year . . . we had a new team, inexperienced, and they did really well...It is a very, very serious competition in Europe, with all the other countries...taking it very seriously. And we have to go over and compete against that mindset and that training set."

The team commander further stated that this year our team placed higher [overall] than any other U.S. team previously competing and they tied last

year's team for the highest international ranking.

The competition started August 6<sup>th</sup> with an amphibious assault landing and then continued with day and night tasks, including orienteering, individual and vehicular obstacle courses, river crossing, rifle marksmanship, knife throwing, urban combat, negotiating a minefield, setting explosives on a bridge, a medical casualty response and a final 10K run (6.2 miles) with equipment and weapons that ended in a 40-yard low-crawl under barbed wire. All tasks were timed and judged by international military umpires.

The team commander explained that "The competition area covered 1,000 square kilometers [247,000 acres] and the actual route that the competition team covered was 250 kilometers [155 miles.] It's important to know they did it in 3-1/2 days." The balance of the time was spent in other competitive activities.

The U.S. team was composed of four Soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard along with a four-man support team. Maryland and Estonia have been partners for 14 years in the National Guard's State Partnership Program. The State Partnership Program helps to strengthen military-to-military contacts between the U.S. and the Estonian military.

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Erna Raid competition commemorates the actions of the Erna long-range military reconnaissance units as well as the Estonian resistance known as the "forest brothers," who assisted them in fighting Soviet Army occupation. The competition took place in the same area of northern Estonia where the original Erna group operated during World War II.







# KEEPING THE M

Army aviation is the same whether you are active duty, National Guard, or Reserve. National Guard pilots fly the same helicopters as active duty pilots and active duty aircraft mechanics have the same training that National Guard mechanics do. There is, however, one very big difference between the two. In the entire Army there are four Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depots and one Headquarters, Aviation Depot Maintenance Round-Out Unit and they are all in the National Guard.

To be more accurate, there used to be four AVCRADs and one HQ ADMRU; however, by 2006 the four AVCRADs had each deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom and with the deployment cycle about to come full circle it was time to validate a new concept in Army aviation logistics and create the “fifth” AVCRAD.

By bringing together HQ ADMRU, located on the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, and Aviation Intermediate Maintenance experienced Soldiers from 16 states, including Maryland, a “fifth” AVCRAD was officially formed on July 11, 2006 and became Task Force AVCRAD currently deployed here.

What makes the transition of the ADMRU

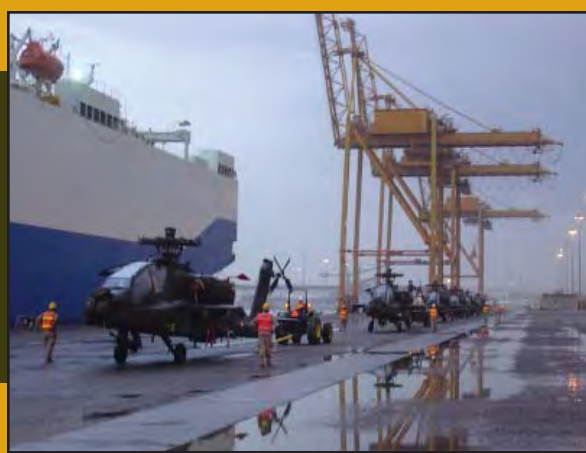
into the “fifth” AVCRAD noteworthy is that the ADMRU is not an organic AVCRAD. “Col. Peterson, who was the commander several times back, called this a graduate level organization,” said Col. Timothy Gowan, Commander of HQ ADMRU and TF AVCRAD. “No one outside of aviation, actually no one even outside of HQ ADMRU, seems to know what we do.”

As a rank heavy command and control cell more used to developing concepts of operations, allocating resources, and providing necessary coordination to accomplish the mission; “graduate level organization” would certainly seem an appropriate description.

Don’t let that description fool you though; this “fifth” AVCRAD has proven as TF AVCRAD, they are much more than a graduate level organization of developers and planners.

Over the course of the last year TF AVCRAD Fix Forward teams were sent to bases in Iraq and Afghanistan to provide direct depot level maintenance and AVIM support to the Combat Aviation Brigades in theatre resulting in over 28,000 man-hours of direct support to units, a direct increase of 30% over previous rotations.

A few of their other accomplishments include completing more than 5,800 separate work orders; producing over 1,400 aviation components under the National Maintenance Program with a serviceable credit value of \$116.7





# MILITARY FLYING

Text by Master Sgt. Anne W. Trainer

million; executing in excess of 412,000 supply transactions; and processing 574 critical Aircraft on the Ground requests.

If that isn't enough, they have also installed Level 5 Up-Armor on 220 HUMVEEs and crew modification kits to the inside of, and armor and slats to the outside of, several hundred Stryker vehicles. Not bad for a rank heavy, command and control cell.

TF AVCRADs success, however, isn't only in what has been accomplished in the aviation logistics and maintenance areas, but also in how well this group of Soldiers from 16 different states has been able to come together as a unit. It's one thing to deploy thousands of miles from home with a unit that has been together for a long period of time, but to do it as a unit that has just been formed is something else altogether.

One of the first things you

notice when you walk into any of the work areas for TF AVCRAD is that easy familiarity and sense of friendship the Soldiers have with each other, as if they really have been together for years. It makes it hard to believe they have only been together for about 12 months.

In the supply shop it's easy to see that these Soldiers have adapted well to each other and their surroundings. Pictures of families, friends, and favorite sports teams are on display over workbenches.

"We're fortunate in this shop because we have a very good working relationship, very good rapport with each other," said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Sharon Norton, TF AVCRAD supply coordinator from Joppa, Maryland. "I really can say the people, some people around here really keep it going, keep you laughing, keep you motivated; really good people, contractors and Soldiers."

The creation of this "fifth" AVCRAD and subsequent deployment has also been beneficial to the Soldiers as a skill enhancement experience. "My level of experience is definitely a lot higher than it was," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Gray, aircraft power plant repairer from Bel Air, Maryland,

"World's of experience have been gained here, immeasurable amounts of experience," Gray said. "You see things break here that you're not going to see back home. So everything you learn here will be invaluable tenfold back home."

The Soldiers that make up TF AVCRAD will eventually return to their respective states and units and their lives will once again become routine. It is doubtful, however, that anyone will forget what they have accomplished or the experience they have gained as part of TF AVCRAD.



Photos courtesy of Soldiers from Task Force AVRAD

# Helping Those

Over the years, National Guard units have deployed to respond to state and national emergencies and overseas operations, but one Maryland unit was recently called upon to fight a different kind of battle.

From Jul. 9 to 23, Airmen of the Maryland Air National Guard's 175th Medical Group from Warfield Air

National Guard Base in Middle River, Md., along with members of the Maryland Defense Force traveled to the Sioux Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota to provide much-needed medical services to reservation residents.

The National Guard was augmented by a team of seven physicians and a psychiatric clinical specialist from the Maryland Defense Force's 10th Medical Regiment based in Towson, Md.

Working at the Rosebud Comprehensive Health Care Facility in Rosebud, S.D., the service members provided many different types of services to numerous patients including dental, optometry, emergency room and pharmaceutical. The unit also provided veterinary assistance to animals on the Rosebud Indian Reservation.

"We have a wide assortment of medical services and they'll all treat their own numbers of patients," said Air Force Master Sgt. Kenneth M. Clark, a public health technician with the 175th. "We are out here to take

care of their backlog; to do the things that they just don't have time or personnel to do themselves."

Clark said the group saw a couple hundred patients but they were prepared for the two-week mission. This is not the group's first time doing this type of mission.



"We've been to Bosnia. We've been to Peru," said Clark. "We've been to Belize and Honduras. Our unit does a lot of humanitarian work."

While the unit members enjoy traveling overseas and feel it is rewarding many of them see the need to stay in the United States.

"It makes me feel great.

I love doing this kind of stuff," said Lt. Col. Rita M. Kurek, a dental surgeon with the 175th. "There is a great need for it. Our unit, especially, has been to a lot of different places."

Kurek added that she was especially happy to be helping Americans here at home.

Master Sgt. John W. Wissman III, first sergeant of the medical group, agreed.

"We're now helping our own people," he said. "We're helping citizens of the United States instead of going outside of the country."

But working domestically was also beneficial to the unit in meeting its training objectives. Members of the MDDF gained operational experience in working with military healthcare providers.

"This deployment provided our medical



# In Need

Text and photography by Staff Sgt. Rob Barker

personnel the opportunity to exercise their professional skills in a challenging remote environment, similar to what one might find during a civil emergency, while at the same time building closer ties and exercising interoperability with our colleagues in the National Guard,” said MDDF Col. Bob Barish, commander of the 10th Medical Regiment. “This is our role: to provide competent technical and professional support to the

National Guard.”

Wissman pointed out that because the unit was working within the United States, there was “no language barrier” and the unit didn’t have to spend as much time traveling as in the past.

The experience of working together as a unit is priceless, with the interaction helping develop the newer members of the group.

“It helps us hone in on our own skills and it gives

us real world experience,” said Wissman. “This allows the newer Airmen we have to interact with the most experienced members of the unit.”

“It’s giving me a lot more confidence than I’ve ever had,” said Airmen 1st Class Erica A. Morga, a medical service technician with the 175th. “I had a really big fear of blood and needles. I’ve overcome that in the last few days.”



Airforce Lt. Col. Robert Corcoran, an optometrist with the 175th Medical Group, evaluates a patient at the Rosebud Comprehensive Health Care Facility in Rosebud, S.D.





# Treading Water

Text by  
Spc. Elizabeth Jones

**I**t is hurricane season, and the Maryland National Guard is keeping troops prepared to respond to Mother Nature's inclement weather. Ground attacks by wind and water are most common during Maryland's summer atmospheric fits, and Soldiers must be ready to drive in extreme weather conditions.

Roughly 50 Soldiers from various units throughout the state of Maryland have successfully completed training this year; each Soldier took a turn driving and riding as a passenger both in an M998 series HMMWV and M800 series 5TON through 50 inches of water.

Commander of the 1229th, Capt. Louis Waters said, "There are numerous

hurricane and flood situations happening around the United States, soldiers need to be prepared for disasters to better serve our communities. This training benefits not only the 1229th Transportation Company soldiers but the citizens of Maryland as well," said Waters.

'Practice makes perfect.' Just as the adage says, the water fording training gives Soldiers the opportunity to work on the skills necessary to combat inclement weather.

Training starts at 0900 and Soldiers are briefed about the day's schedule and then the series of tasks they will accomplish. First soldiers install a water fording kit.

An extension is added to the exhaust to reach the top of the vehicle. Then an air

intake extension is added for air to enter the air intake. The engine oil and transmission oil dipstick is changed - swelling the rubber seal - unlike the dipstick in your own passenger car, it is just a push / pull - prevents water from entering the system. Finally the air filter housing is sealed to keep water from entering the air filter.

Training ends when the last person has driven through the canal and all vehicles are returned to the motor pool are dried and the fording kits uninstalled. Then Soldiers perform an after action review of the day's events.

"I believe it [training] has proven most effective, as it gives the soldier a greater feeling of what the vehicle can and cannot do in adverse conditions," said Clyde A. Orr, Maintenance Assistance & Instruction Team Member.

Soldiers reflect on times that have required Maryland Guard members to service and how the training will be needed for the future.

"I imagined the feelings of despair the victims of Hurricane Katrina may have experienced as we drove through 50 inches of water," said Spc. Lelia C. McLean, a driver for the 1229<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company.

"Training exercises such as this

have confirmed the importance of my job with the Guard and I know we will be making a difference in peoples' lives.

Members of the 1229th Transportation Company practice water fording with military vehicles at Aberdeen Proving Grounds. This training is essential to ensure Soldiers are ready to react to situations like those confronted during hurricane Katrina.

Photography by Spc. Elizabeth Jones and APG Staff



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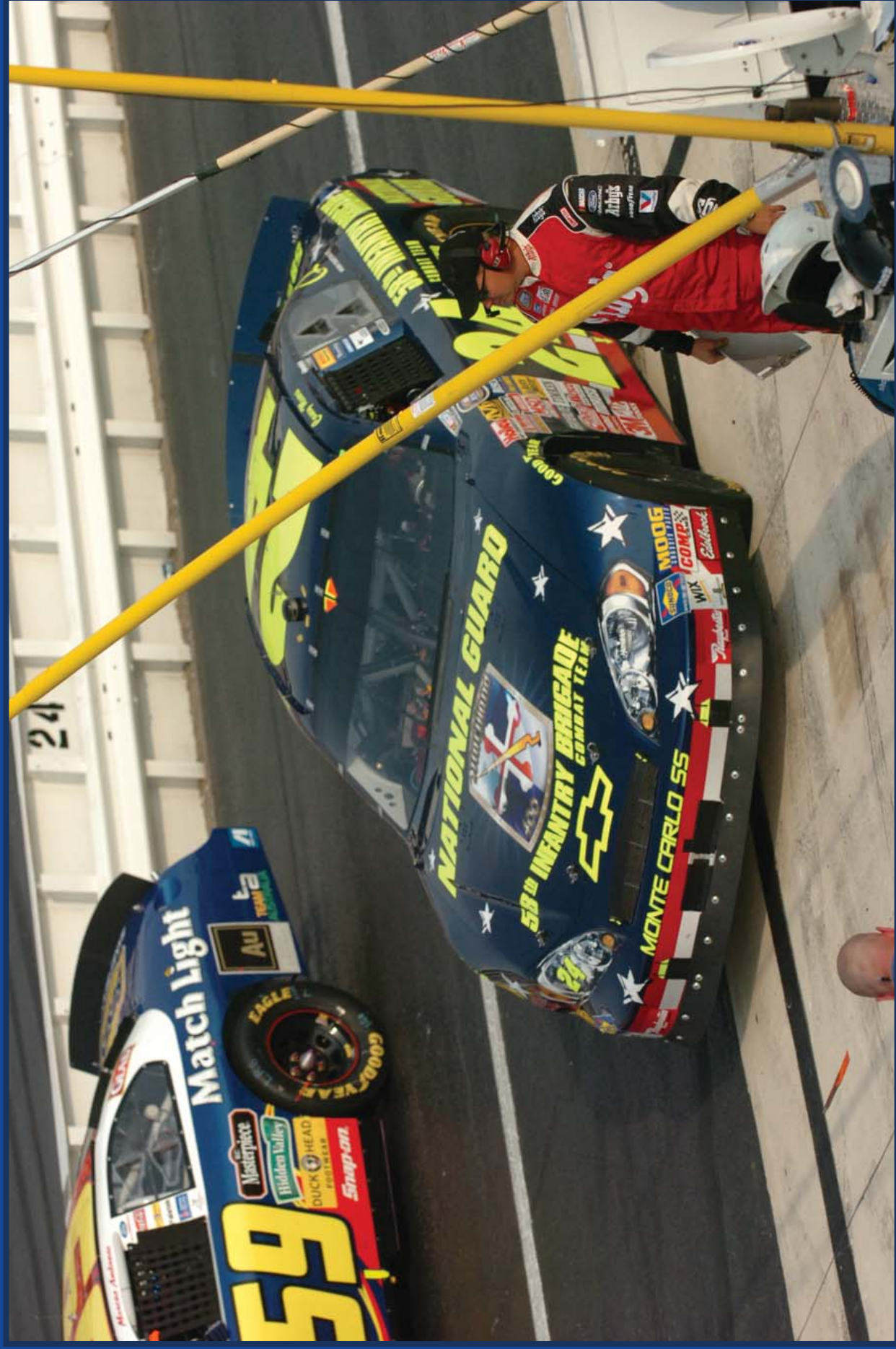


ading Water

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# Final Frame....



Soldiers from the 2-110 Field Artillery Battalion, 58th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was on hand as Casey Mears, Hendrick Motorsports' driver of the National Guard box car no. 24, placed 4th in the Nascar Busch Series Cup race. Casey's car wore the 58th IBCT patch on it's hood and proudly represented the Soldiers of the Maryland Army National Guard. Photo by Sgt. Isolda McClelland